

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, Applicants request favorable reconsideration of this application.

Claims 15 and 19-22 remain pending in this application, with Claim 15 being the sole independent claim. By this Amendment, Applicants have amended the specification and Claims 15, 19, and 21, and canceled Claims 1-14 and 16-18. No new matter has been added.

The drawings stand objected to for various reasons. Accompanying this Amendment is a Submission of Replacement Drawings. In the Submission, Applicants have amended Figures 2 and 3 to attend to the matters noted in the Office Action as giving rise to the objections to the drawings. No new matter has been added.

Claims 5-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Applicants submit that this rejection is rendered moot in view of the cancellation of those claims.

Claims 1-3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,848,685 (Katsuyama). Claims 15-17, 19, and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,443,320 (Agata, et al.).

Claim 4 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Katsuyama in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,423,529 (Saito, et al.). Claim 20 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Agata, et al. in view of Saito, et al. Claim 22 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Agata, et al. in view of Katsuyama.

Applicants have canceled Claims 1-4, 16, and 17, rendering the rejections of those claims moot.


Also, Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for acknowledging that Claim 18 contains allowable subject matter, and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Rather than rewriting Claim 18 in independent form, Applicants have amended independent Claim 15 to include the features recited in Claim 18, as well as the features recited in the intervening claims (Claims 16 and 17).

In incorporating the features from Claims 16-18 into independent Claim 15, Applicants have also addressed various informalities. In particular, with respect to canceled Claim 16, the language of that claim as incorporated into independent Claim 15 has been amended to change “supply opening” and “discharge opening” to --first cover member-- and --second cover member--, respectively. In addition, with respect to the features from canceled Claim 17, “connection member” has been changed to --connection means--. These changes merely attend to minor errors in the claims and do not affect the allowability of Claim 15. Accordingly, Applicants submit that Claim 15 is allowable and request allowance thereof.

Applicants request favorable consideration of this Amendment and issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,


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